

Bexar County's Head Start Dental Screenings Program

Dental caries, commonly known as tooth decay, is the most common chronic infectious disease of children ages 5-17 years old. It is a preventable disease that can lead to persistent pain, infection, compromised nutritional intake, difficulty sleeping and reduced self-esteem. The CDC estimates that more than 51 million school hours are lost each year due to dental-related illness. Children and adolescents living in poverty are disproportionately affected by dental disease. It is a widely known fact that 80% of tooth decay is found in only 20% of children. Fluoridated community water systems and school-based sealant programs are proven strategies to eliminate oral health disparities.

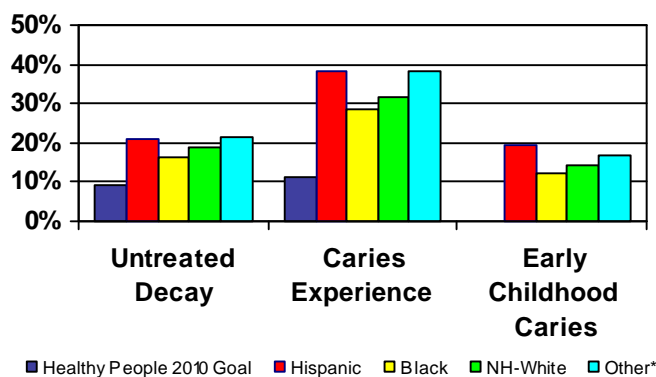
In 2006, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District dentists provided more than 6,734 on-site dental screenings to Head Start enrollees in Bexar County. Children from households with a family income at or below 133% of poverty meet the eligibility requirements for Head Start. The following table presents the data collected and compiled from the screening process from 2001 through 2006 for enrollees between the ages 3 to 5. The data collected during the 2006 school year indicates that 1,414 enrollees (21%) exhibited visible signs of untreated decay at the time of screening. More than 42% of the group had caries experience. That is, signs of both treated and/or untreated decay. The Healthy People 2010 goals for children from two to four years of age are 11% for caries experience and 9% for untreated decay in the primary dentition. Clearly, the oral health status of this patient sample fall significantly short of national objectives.

Year	TOTAL Screenings	Visible Signs of Decay	% of Total	No Visible Sign of Decay	% of Total	Caries Experience	% of Total
2006	6,734	1,414	21%	5,320	79%	2,848	42%
2005*	12,301	1,908	16%	10,393	84%	4,670	38%
2004*	11,472	2,075	18%	9,397	82%	4,240	37%
2003*	11,142	2,258	20%	8,884	80%	4,301	39%
2002*	10,545	2,834	27%	7,711	73%	4,626	44%
2001*	6,268	1,969	31%	4,299	69%	3,050	49%
Totals	58,462	12,458	21%	46,004	79%	23,735	41%

* Indicates 2 screenings were performed for each enrollee during the designated school year.

In 2006, **Basic Screening Survey** data was collected on a randomized sampling of 4815 Head Start children in San Antonio. The Basic Screening Survey is a screening tool that is used nationally to monitor the oral health of communities. The charts below represent the data collected in 2006.

	No. of Children	% of Total
Total Screened	4,815	
Untreated Decay	983	20.4%
Caries Experience	1,768	36.7%
Early Childhood Caries	884	18.4%



BASIC SCREENING SURVEY 2006

Sample: Parent Child Inc., San Antonio, TX

Survey Conducted: 08/06-12/06

Age Range of Children: 3 years - 5 years

*Other includes Asian, Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and Native American